

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1901

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, BB, US
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS' TERMS FOR RENEWAL--CONSIDERATIONS,
OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REF: A) BRIDGETOWN 1900

1. IF THE POSITION ADOPTED BY THE GOB IN ITS AIDE MEMOIRE
IS A SERIOUS STATEMENT OF BARBADIAN TERMS, WE FEEL
THERE ARE BUT TWO BASIC OPTIONS OPEN TO US:

OPTION ONE

IN A MOST FRIENDLY MANNER INFORM THE GOB THAT, IN VIEW OF
THE VERY WIDE DISPARITY IN OUR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS
WE CONCLUDE NO AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE AND WE SHALL PROCEED
IN AS ORDERLY AND QUIET A MANNER AS POSSIBLE TO CLOSE
THE FACILITY. TO LESSEN THE SHOCK OF THIS ACTION SOMEWHAT
WE SHOULD COMMENCE SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE GOB ON POSSIBLE
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND OFFER TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS
CONVERTING THE FACILITY INTO A TECHNICAL SCHOOL--
WHICH IS THE USE THE GOB TELLS ME IT PLANS FOR THE
FACILITY.

OPTION TWO
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INFORM THE GOB THAT DESPITE GREAT DISPARITY BETWEEN OUR
POSITIONS WE ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS.
THIS OPTION IMPLIES THE FINAL AGREEMENT WILL BE MUCH
CLOSER TO OUR POSITION THAN TO THEIRS. AS OF NOW,
I DO NOT SEE HOW THE TWO POSITIONS COULD BE RECONCILED
WITHOUT GREAT STRAIN ON BILATERAL RELATIONS. FURTHER

NEGOTIATIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE ACRIMONIOUS SINCE IT IS THE GOB WHICH WOULD HAVE THE FURTHEST TO RETREAT.

2. SHOULD THE GOB BE PERSUADED TO CONSIDER ITS AIDE MEMOIRE AN INFORMATIONAL "NON-PAPER" OR IF WE CHOSE TO TREAT IT AS SUCH, A THIRD OPTION PRESENTS ITSELF:

OPTION THREE

INFORM THE GOB IN ACCEPTING ITS OFFER TO RENEW THE EXISTING AGREEMENT FOR SIX MONTHS AND THROUGH THE APPOINTMENT OF OUR MEMBERS OF THE SUB-BOARD OF THE REVIEWING PANEL THAT WE REMAIN INTERESTED IN THE FACILITY AND ARE WILLING TO CONTINUE PREPARATORY TALKS LEADING TO NEGOTIATIONS AT A LATER DATE. IN BRIEF TO PLAY FOR TIME WHICH IS ON OUR SIDE.

3. OPTION THREE HAS SEVERAL ADVANTAGES. MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE MOMENT COULD BE ALLOWED TO BE OVERTAKEN BY OTHER EVENTS, SUCH AS THE ANDREW YOUNG VISIT. WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TIME TO CONSIDER THE AIDE MEMOIRE. TIME GAINED WILL ALLOW THE USG TO CONVEY TO THE GOB A CLEARER INDICATION OF THE ACTUAL VALUE WE PLACE ON THE FACILITY.

4. SUPPORTING THIS OPTION ARE SEVERAL FACTORS. PRIME MINISTER ADAMS AND EX-TAFF MINISTER FORDE ARE RECEPTIVE AND REASONABLE
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MEN. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS PAST EXPRESSIONS THAT THE FACILITY IS WELCOME IN BARBADOS (FROM MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY IN PUBLIC DEBATE, FROM EXTERNAL AFFAIRS' OFFER TO EXTEND THE EXISTING AGREEMENT, FROM PERSONAL ASSURANCES FROM GOB LEADERS). THE SUB-BOARD COULD BEGIN TACKLING THE QUESTIONS THE GOB WANTS TO RAISE AS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT (SOMETHING THAT MUST BE DONE ANYWAY). CONSIDERATION OF THE RETROACTIVE COMPENSATION ISSUE CAN BE FURTHER CLARIFIED (AS IT MUST BE ANYWAY). AN AID ECONOMIC SURVEY TEAM IS EXPECTED IN THE AREA IN SEPT/OCT. PRESUMABLY THIS TEAM CAN BEGIN SEPARATING BARBADOS' AID REQUESTS FROM THE ISSUE OF THE FACILITY (WHICH MUST BE DONE ANYWAY) AND GIVE CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT OUR ASSERTIONS OF THE SEPARATENESS ARE NOT AN EXCUSE TO AVOID TALKING TO THE GOB ABOUT AID.

5. IN CONVINCING THE GOB OF THE ACTUAL VALUE WE PLACE ON THE FACILITY, MORE TIME ALSO WOULD BE HELPFUL. WE HAVE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES AT HAND TO FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING.

A) THE EMBASSY CAN GIVE PRIVATE BUT DIRECT BRIEFING TO ADAMS, FORDE, AND OTHER GOB LEADERS.

B) INTENSIVE EFFORTS CAN BE MADE TO REACH A FINAL AGREEMENT WITH ANTIGUA ON THE FACILITIES THERE SO THAT THE MONETARY TERMS OF THAT AGREEMENT CAN BE MADE PUBLIC AND THUS IMPRESS UPON THE GOB THE REALISTIC PARAMETERS OF COMPENSATION (A VISIT OF THE AID ECONOMIC SURVEY TEAM TO ANTIGUA WOULD ALSO HELP SATISFY THE GOA DESIRE FOR AID ASSURANCES AND POSSIBLY GET THE USG PAST THAT STUMBLING BLOCK IN REACHING A FINAL AGREEMENT WITH THE GOA);

C) PRIME MINISTER ADAMS HAS A TENTATIVE APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER FOR SEPT 23 OR OCT 3 (ON ONE SIDE OF THE OTHER OF ADAMS' PLANNED ATTENDANCE AT THE IMF FINANCE MINISTERS MEETING IN WASHINGTON.
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PRESIDENT CARTER OR A LESSER USG OFFICIAL MIGHT BRIEF ADAMS AT OR AROUND THAT MEETING OR AT A SEPARATE DATE AT ADAMS' CONVENIENCE ON VALUE USG PLACES ON, AND USG PLANS FOR, THE FACILITY;

D) EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER FORDE IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE UNGA SOMETIME DURING ITS FALL SESSION AND MIGHT BE BRIEFED IN NEW YORK OR DURING A SPECIAL TRIP TO WASHINGTON.

RECOMMENDATION:

WHILE OPTION THREE OR SOME VARIATION SUCH AS A SCALED-DOWN THREE YEAR AGREEMENT APPEARS POSSIBLE, I FEEL THAT SHOULD WE GO THAT PATH, ULTIMATELY LONG TERM AND BASIC US INTERESTS IN THIS AREA AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE WOULD SUFFER. ASSUMING THE US ACCEPTS THE A PRIORI CONDITIONS TO SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS, THE HAGGLING AND DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE INTERMINABLE AND SUBJECT TO CONSTANT MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

ON BALANCE I TEND TOWARDS OPTION ONE. IT IS QUICKER, NEATER, AND, SINCE WE PLAN TO CLOSE A MARGINAL FACILITY DOWN IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME ANYWAY, IT WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO ASSURE OUR LONG TERM INTERESTS IN THIS STOUT LITTLE ISLAND, ALTHOUGH I DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE SHORT-TERM JOLT. PARADOXICALLY, GIVEN THE STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE FACILITY, OUR ACTION TO LEAVE COULD WELL IMPEL THE GOB TOWARDS A RADICAL REVISION OF ITS TERMS WHICH COULD MAKE AN AGREEMENT POSSIBLE.
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